

Make soldiers a top priority

A bright future beckons in 1997. We're close to completing our downsizing to an endstrength of 208,000. We've worked out many of the restructuring kinks in transitioning to a core competency of combat service support. The months ahead promise more stability, better training opportunities.

That's the big picture. Now let me focus on a unit-level issue – taking care of soldiers.

It's every leader's paramount responsibility to do so, from team leader to company commander. Success breeds success. Problems reap more problems.

Some areas for leaders to focus on in 1997:

- **Sponsorship** – Set the optempo from Day 1. Assign good people to this impor-

tant job. Follow up to ensure the newcomer is getting all the help he or she deserves.

- **Family Support** – Know the basics of the program and whom to call for help.

- **MGIB, promotions, pay issues** – Make these entitlements work. Ensure paperwork is done correctly and on time.

- **Training** – Keep soldiers busy in support of the mission, be it AT or weekend drill. Make the work meaningful as well as fun. Stress physical fitness.

Granted, my thoughts are not revolutionary, but my message – *take care of soldiers* – is so important. Heed the call.

Starting with this issue, I'm giving half my column space to the CSM. It's a privilege, Top, to do so. And long needed.



Maj. Gen. Max Baratz